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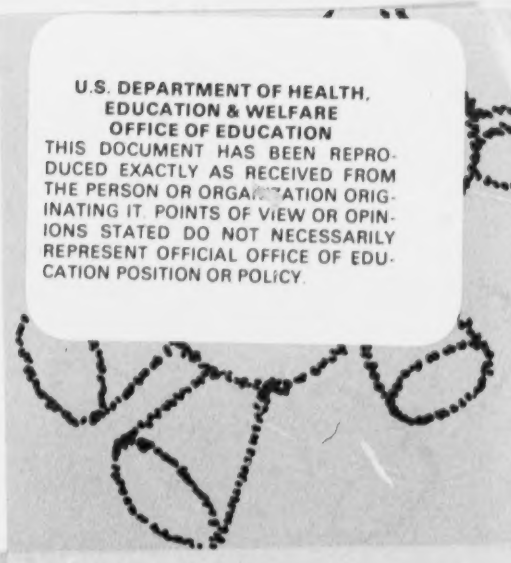
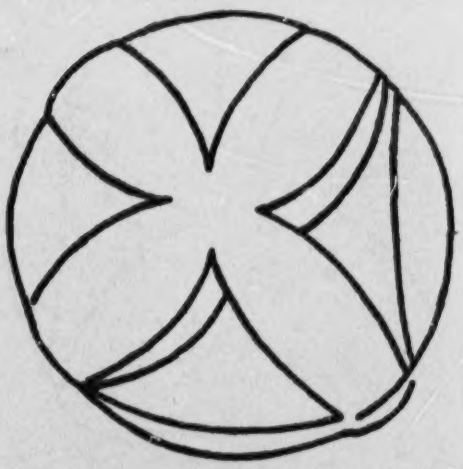
ABSTRACT

This pamphlet provides useful tips to parents interested in choosing safe toys for children 2-7 years old. Criteria age given to guide against buying potentially dangerous electrical and nonelectrical playthings. Rules for use and care of outdoor play equipment are suggested. Also described are precautions which parents may take to decrease the chance of accidents. (WY)

SAFE TOYS FOR YOUR CHILD

how to select them
how to use them safely





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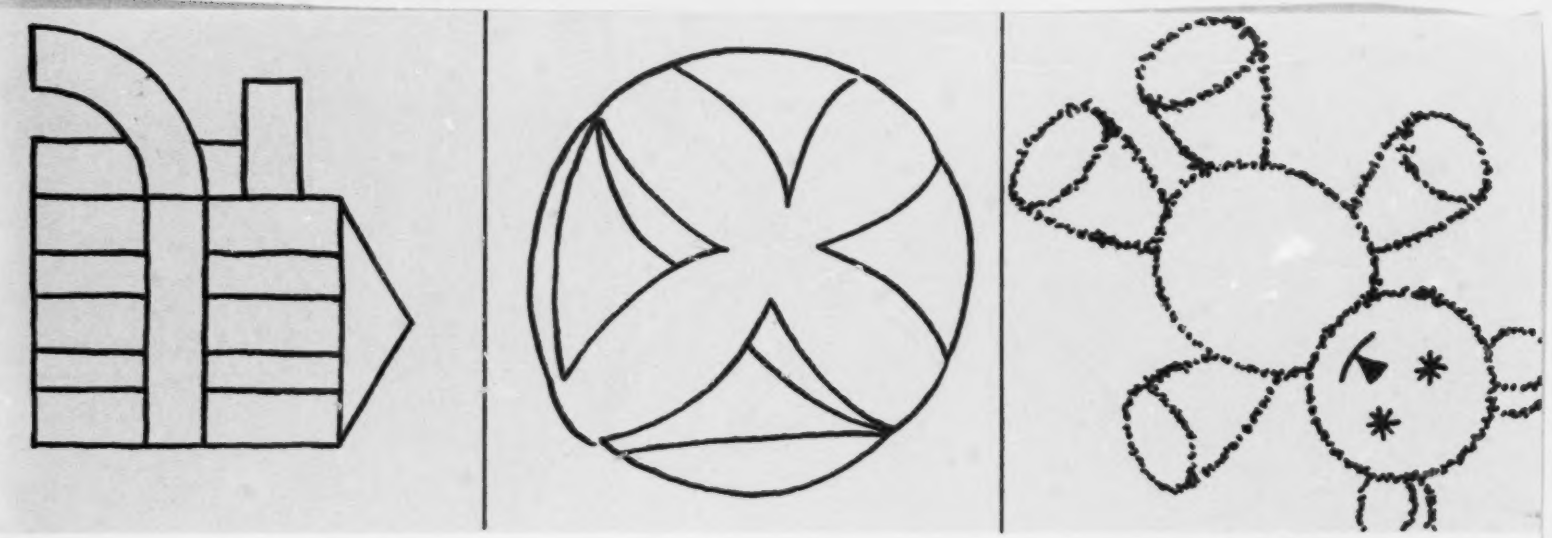

SAFE TOYS FOR YOUR CHILD

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DID YOU KNOW

That age 5 appears to be the most vulnerable single year for boys and girls to receive toy or play injuries?

That park playground equipment, such as merry-go-rounds, swings, and jungle gyms, account for most injuries to the 2-7 year olds?

That any toy can be unsafe if given to the wrong child, to a child at the wrong age, or when it is misused?

That a child's safety depends on the types of toys selected, the way they are maintained, and the amount of safety training received in the home?

Source: Survey sponsored by National Safety Council

INTRODUCTION

Bright-eyed dolls that look pretty on the store shelf, electric stoves that are just like "mother's," rattles with tiny colored balls inside . . . these toys and others seem harmless, yet with careful inspection, you may find they are actually a threat to your child's safety.

Although complete statistical information is not available, the U.S. Public Health Service estimates that 700,000 children are injured each year as a result of accidents from toys. There are Federal and State laws regarding safety standards, but nevertheless many potentially dangerous toys are still being sold, so it's wise to check before buying.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Avoid toys that have sharp edges and protrusions, such as a bird with a pointed beak that can be jabbed in your child's eyes.
- Remove any splinters or projecting nails from boxes or other equipment before giving them to your child. Select toys with rounded edges and smooth surfaces.
- Make sure that plastic is used and not plate glass in toy car, truck, or airplane windows.
- Avoid toys that are poorly constructed, like a rattle that could break apart and free little balls for the child to swallow, and noise makers and squeaker toys with metal mouth pieces or squeakers that fall out.
- Avoid toys that have detachable parts, such as button eyes that your child can put in his ears, nose, or mouth. Dolls with embroidered or firmly glued eyes are safer.
- Check to see that stuffed toys are filled with hygienic material that is washable and can be changed.
- Avoid dolls with fluffy trimmings that the child can pull off and put in his mouth.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Look for the UL (Underwriters Laboratories) seal on electrical toys. It shows that the toy has been tested for safety of its electrical parts.

- When painting a child's crib or toys, use only paints that are labelled "lead-free," or "non-toxic." These paints will not contain antimony, arsenic, cadmium, mercury, selenium, or soluble barium, which could be harmful to your child. Since not all paints are so labelled, look for and use only those that are marked: "Conforms to American standard Z66.1-9: For use on surfaces that might be chewed by children."

OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT

Although there is no specific age when a child starts using playground equipment, skates, bikes, or other outdoor toys, he should be old enough to know the dangers of such equipment and be taught to follow certain rules:

- Bicycles, tricycles, or sleds should not be used where there is traffic, and should be used carefully in areas where other children are at play.

- Roller skates should be taken off before crossing the street.

You, as a parent, should see to it that swings and other playground equipment are firmly placed in the ground, away from walls and fences, and out of the direct line of automobile or pedestrian traffic. The equipment should be the right size for the child and assembled according to the directions of the manufacturer.

6

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THE CARE OF YOUR CHILD'S TOYS

How you care for your child's toys is almost as important as the selection of his toys. Many accidents are the result of carelessness and could have been avoided if certain precautions were taken. A few things to remember are:

- Don't leave indoor toys outdoors overnight. Rain or dew could damage the toy and increase the chance of accidents.

- There should be a special place for a child to keep his toys. They should be stored on toy shelves or in a box or chest or special room or area where they cannot easily be damaged or cause someone to trip over them.

- As soon as your child is able to walk and move about, he can usually be trained to put his toys away.

- Broken toys are hazardous and should be discarded. Arms of dolls or stuffed animals, for example, are often attached by sharp pieces of metal that could be injurious to your child.

SOME TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Your child's age will serve as a general guide in helping you select his toys. Manufacturers have marked many toys by age or level of skill to help you make your selection.

- Toys should be kept separate for each age group, as an older child's toys might be harmful to a younger child.

- With various types of electrical toys, such as stoves and irons, supervision may be necessary until the child knows how to use them carefully. There should also be supervision for pull toys with long cords that could strangle the child.

WHO CARES ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY?

The toy industry is constantly subject to change. New toys are placed in stores each year. New materials and ways of making toys are consistently being developed. What is being done to assure the safety of your child's toys?

- The Federal Hazardous Substances Act of 1960 and its amendments include safety provisions for toys. The Child Protection and Toy Safety Act of 1969 extended the provisions of the Federal Hazardous Substances

Act to include "electrical, thermal, and mechanical" aspects of playthings and other children's articles. This legislation is the responsibility of the Food and Drug Administration's Bureau of Product Safety.

- The National Safety Council has a Child Safety Committee to help assure the safety of children, including their toys. The Committee also follows up on complaints about dangerous toys.
- The Toy Manufacturers of America, a trade association of domestic producers of toys, games, and decorations, drafts general safety guidelines for distribution throughout the industry.

BUT, REMEMBER . . .

A toy is only as safe as its owner. Rules and guidelines will not protect your child if he is careless with his toys or if you select an "unsafe" toy. If you remember to select toys carefully and teach your child the necessary safety rules, toys and play will be both safe and enjoyable.

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